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For Immediate Release
Sept. 9, 2010

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Baton Rouge area attains the 1997 8-hour standard for pollutant ozone

BATON ROUGE – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that air monitoring data shows that the Baton Rouge area has attained the 1997 8-hour standard for the pollutant ozone. EPA made a similar determination that the area is meeting the prior and now revoked standard that was based on 1-hour ozone readings in February of this year.

The DEQ presented EPA with a package of complete, quality assured and certified ambient air quality data showing that the area monitored attainment of the standard based upon data collected between 2006 and 2009. EPA evaluated the data and agreed with the DEQ's proposal. EPA previously published a Federal Register notice of their intent to make this determination.

They reviewed comments that were received pursuant to the public notice and made a determination to approve the request. This EPA action suspends certain Clean Air Act required planning activities, allowing agency staff to focus on implementation efforts directed towards a new, tougher ozone standard scheduled to be announced later this Fall.

On August 31, 2010, the DEQ submitted its final redesignation request to EPA, taking the final step in requesting that EPA officially redesignate the Baton Rouge 5-parish area into attainment with the 1997 ozone standard. Nationally, EPA acts on redesignation requests in under one year.

“Residents, business and community leaders in the Baton Rouge area need to be recognized for their proactive roles in implementing practices that resulted in cleaner air for the community,” said Peggy Hatch, DEQ Secretary. “While there will be new measures required as a result of the impending national ozone standard change, we need to observe the hard work and perseverance that have gone into these tremendous air quality improvements.”

Link to the Federal Register Notice: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-22341.pdf>